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ITEM 7:* PROGRAMME MATTERS, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

WORLD ENVIRONMENT ACADEMY

Report of the Executive Director

1. The Executive Director has prepared the present report on the world environment academy, as requested by the Council in its decision 16/8 of 31 May 1991. The idea of creating a world environment academy was first discussed at the Informal Ministerial Consultation convened by the Executive Director in January 1989, and again at a second Consultation in January 1990. It was received with interest and the Consultation meetings requested the Executive Director to pursue the idea. Consequently, the Executive Director submitted proposals on the issue to the Governing Council at its second special session (UNEP/GCSS II/2) and at its sixteenth regular session (UNEP/GC.16/4/Add.3 and Corr.1 and 2).

2. In compliance with decision 16/8, in which the Council requested the Executive Director to bring the matter to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Executive Director submitted the relevant information to the Committee. No reference is made to the possible establishment of a world environment academy in the final documents of UNCED, nor in Agenda 21, as adopted at UNCED and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

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* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/GC.17/1).

3. In December 1992, the Executive Director held a high-level consultative meeting in New York with a number of his colleagues from the United Nations and the scientific community, including representatives of the United Nations University, the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), and the Royal Academy of Sciences of Sweden, to explore further the feasibility of establishing a world environment academy.

4. The idea of the academy received general support at that high-level consultative meeting and each participant expressed willingness to continue working with UNEP on its design and development. Some participants saw it as being immediately useful in helping to bridge the gap between science and policy, a matter that could become increasingly critical in responding to the challenge posed by sustainable development.

5. In view of the number of post-UNCED developments and of the financial and institutional implications for UNEP of the possible establishment of a world environment academy, the Executive Director proposes to keep the issue under review and to come back to it at a later stage.